(c) The Forest Survey of Idnia undertakes biennial assessment of forests including mangroves using Satellite Imagery, Bhitarkanika is one of the 35 identified mangrove sites for intensive conservation and management and is given assistance on 100% grant basis for various activities like Survey and Demarcation, Afforestation & Mangroves, Alternate and Supplementary Livelihoods, Protection Measures, and Education & Awareness.

Coastal ECO System

4694. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state.

(a) whether work relating to identificationmapping and digitization of the coastal ecosystem for the purpose of sustainable management has been taken up; and

(b) if so, the progress thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Work relating to mapping and digitization of eco-sensitive areas had been assigned to Institure for Ocean Management, Anna University, Chennai. The Institute so far has identified, mapped and digitised the eco-sensitive areas in coastal areas of West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Gujarat. With regard to the other coastal States and Union Territories, the work is in progress.

Violation of Environment Protection Act, 1986

4695. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have permitted laying of Railway lines and drawing of high tension electric cables etc. to pass through forest areas and wildlife sanctuary as in case of the Kodagu district of Karnataka implying cutting of thousands of trees to create a 100 meter wide corridor for cables;

(b) whether such acts of omission and commission by Government tantamount to weakening and violation of Environment Protection Act, 1986; and

(c) whether such acts open up thick virgin forest areas to human intrusion for the first time leading to illegal poaching, logging and other environmentally destructive activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) As per information received from the Government of Karnataka, no such permission for creation of corridor for laying of cables, has been granted in Kodagu District under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. However, M/s. Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. has proposed to take up survey work for the construction of 400 KV DC transmission line between Mysore and Kozikode passing through Kodagu district without involving tree felling. Further, under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the Central Government grants permission/forestry clearance for implementation of development projects including construction of railway lines and laying of transmission lines, on forest land. As per the guidelines issued under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the maximum permissible right of way for laying of transmission lines of 800 KV in forest areas, is 85 metres. Druing implementation of such development projects, minimum felling of trees as per the requirement of the project, is invariably involved.

(b) It is mandatory for all the State/Union Territory (UT) Governments and the concerned user agency to seek all statutory clearances prior to taking up any non-forestry activity on the forest land. There is no question of omission and commission on the part of the Central Government in this regard. To undertake any non-forestry activity in forest areas, the State/UT Government and the concerned user agency are required to take prior permission of the Central Government under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. If the project area falls in a national park/sanctuary, the project proposal, *inter-alia*, requires the recommendation of National Board of Wildlife, and permission of the Supreme Court. Alongwith forestry clearance under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, if applicable depending upon the nature of the project, the user agency is also required to seek environmental clearance under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

(c) Conservation and development have to proceed hand in hand, and Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, is playing a pivotal role in balancing the conservation efforts with developmental activities in forest areas of the country. Since implementation of development projects on forest lands invariably involves felling of trees, including other impacts on environment, the Central Government stipulates specific conditions for carrying out compensatory afforestation, wildlife management plans and anti-poaching scheme etc., to mitigate the ill-effects arising out of diversion of forest land and consequent felling of trees.